



STATE OF VERMONT
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

August 26, 2020

The Honorable Philip B. Scott, Governor
109 State Street
The Pavilion
Montpelier, VT 05609-0101

Dear Governor Scott,

Thank you for your letter of August 12th and expression of interest in H.688, the Global Warming Solutions Act.

As we navigate the state of emergency brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, science tells us that it is but a precursor to the rolling crises Vermont will face as a result of the global climate emergency. We don't know precisely when or where the next ruinous storms will hit Vermont, but they will come. We do know that the sooner we pivot Vermont's economy away from fossil fuel use, the less expensive and disruptive that conversion will be and the more it will contribute to job creation and economic growth. We can no longer delay. It's time to plan, prepare, and act.

In your first year as governor, with President Trump announcing he was pulling the United States out of the Paris Treaty, you partnered Vermont with two dozen other states to form the U.S. Climate Alliance, a commitment to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 26%-28% below 2005 levels by 2025. In the absence of federal leadership, these interstate compacts are critical to concerted action to address climate change. And many states have acted forcefully.

Unfortunately, three years later, Vermont still lacks a strategy to prepare for and address climate change. We don't even have an accounting of what programs exist in state government nor their efficacy. Our most vulnerable communities and rural areas lack the resiliency needed for the climate emergency. And Vermont is the only state in the northeast with higher greenhouse gas emissions than we had 30 years ago. With other states in the U.S. Climate Alliance moving forcefully on climate action, it's time for Vermont to catch up.

In your August 12th letter, you highlighted elements of H.688 you would like to see changed. These elements were considered by the legislature earlier this year. On these proposed changes we continue to disagree.

Back in January and February, your administration brought several recommendations to the House Energy & Technology Committee, some of which were incorporated into H.688: your Secretary of Administration was elevated to chair the bill's Climate Council, deadlines for action were extended, and an inventory of state government programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions was added to the bill. The House declined to include the three changes you reiterated in your August letter because of concerns that they would weaken the accountability provisions in the legislation and undermine the accelerated pace for the completion of this work.

Following the House's adoption of H.688, the Senate Natural Resources Committee considered your administration's proposals to alter H.688 and also declined to make these changes. In June, the Senate passed a version of H.688 similar to the House's bill.

With you we share the priorities of taking strong and immediate action to prepare Vermont for the climate crisis, ensuring financial stability and economic growth in our state as we transition away from fossil fuels, and enhancing the resiliency of our most vulnerable communities.

We appreciate the contributions you and your administration have made to improve aspects of H.688 and look forward to continuing our work with you as this bill becomes law.

Respectfully,

Representative Mitzi Johnson, Speaker of the House
Representative Tim Briglin, Chair, Energy & Technology Committee
Representative Laura Sibilio, Vice Chair, Energy & Technology Committee